

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product that is associated with a number of configurable features, wherein the method allows a customer to dynamically interact with a seller of the product and with a manufacturer of a feature of the product over a network during the configuration, the method comprising:

receiving into a configuration engine of the seller a selected feature from the customer, wherein the selected feature is to be made based on the customer's selection;

communicating, from the configuration engine of the seller to a manufacturer system, the selected feature, the communication being during the configuration with the customer, wherein the manufacturer system is associated with a manufacturer of the selected feature, wherein the manufacturer is independent from the seller;

receiving into the configuration engine from the manufacturer system over the network an automated real-time response to the communicated selected feature, the automated real-time response including an availability date that corresponds to the selected feature, the response being received during the configuration with the customer; and

updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect the selected feature and the availability date.

36-38. (Cancelled)

39. (Currently Amended) A method for selling a configurable product incorporating at least one feature to be selected by a customer, wherein the method allows a customer to dynamically interact with a seller of the product and with a supplier of a feature of the product over a network during the configuration, the method comprising:

(a) receiving a feature selection from the customer at a seller;

6 (b) updating an inventory library based upon the received selection to reflect
7 constraints imposed by the received feature selection, the constraints relating to a technical
8 feature limitation, a price limitation or availability of the configurable product;

9 (c) providing the received selection to a supplier system during a the
10 configuration of the product with the customer, wherein the supplier system is associated with a
11 supplier of the selected feature, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller;

12 (d) receiving real-time information from the supplier system comprising at
13 least one of availability date and price for the selected feature ~~received selection~~, the information
14 being received by the customer during the configuration;

15 (e) wherein when an indication is received from the customer indicating the
16 customer is not satisfied with the availability date or price, providing to the supplier system at
17 least one of a customer desired availability date and a customer desired price for the selected
18 feature selection;

19 (f) providing to the customer accommodation data from the supplier system,
20 the accommodation data responsive to the at least one of the customer desired availability date
21 and the customer desired price for the selected feature ~~selection~~, wherein the accommodation
22 data includes a second availability date or a second price of the selected feature; and

23 (g) updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of
24 materials, and a configuration bill of materials based on the received selection.

1 40-49. (Cancelled)

1 50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising: repeating
2 the steps of receiving into a configuration engine a selected feature, communicating to a
3 manufacturer system the selected feature, receiving from the manufacturer system an automated
4 real-time response including an availability date, and updating a number of times until the
5 configuration is complete thereby yielding a completed bill of materials.

1 51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the step of receiving
2 from the manufacturer system an automated real-time response including an availability date is
3 preceded by the step of communicating the selected feature to a vendor, wherein the
4 manufacturer obtains materials from the vendor for the selected feature.

1 52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, the method further
2 comprising: in response to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
3 communicating a customer-specified availability date to at least one of the configuration engine
4 or the manufacturer system.

1 53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the availability date
2 received from the manufacturer system is in response to a customer-specified availability date
3 communicated to at least one of the configuration engine or the manufacturer system.

1 54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the availability date
2 received from the manufacturer system is in response to a customer-specified price
3 communicated to at least one of the configuration engine or the manufacturer system.

1 55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising: deriving,
2 from the in-process bill of materials, an in-process manufacturing bill of materials that reflects
3 the received availability date that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the automated real-
2 time response also includes a received price that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, the method further
2 comprising: in response to the received price being unsatisfactory to the customer,
3 communicating a customer-specified price to at least one of the configuration engine or the
4 manufacturer system.

1 58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the price received is
2 in response to a customer-specified availability date communicated to at least one of the
3 configuration engine or the manufacturer system.

1 59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 56, wherein the price received is
2 in response to a customer-specified price communicated to at least one of the configuration
3 engine or the manufacturer system.

1 60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein a relationship
2 between the customer and the seller has a configuration side associated with the customer, and a
3 resource planning side associated with the seller, and the customer-seller relationship is
4 respectively one of a consumer-seller relationship, a seller-supplier relationship and a supplier-
5 vendor relationship.

1 61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60, further comprising:
2 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the
3 configuration side, deriving an in-process pricing bill of materials from the in-process bill of
4 materials, wherein the in-process pricing bill of materials reflects the price of the selected
5 feature; and

6 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the resource
7 planning side, deriving the in-process pricing bill of materials from an in-process manufacturing
8 bill of materials that is derived from the in-process bill of materials and reflects the received
9 availability date of the selected feature.

1 62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the pricing bill of
2 materials is derived from the configuration bill of materials.

1 63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the pricing bill of
2 materials is derived from the manufacturing bill of materials.

1 64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the step (g) of
2 updating at least one of a manufacturing bill of materials, a pricing bill of materials, and a
3 configuration bill of materials is based upon the accommodation data from the supplier system.

1 65-67. (Canceled)

1 68. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product having at least one
2 selectable feature, wherein the method allows a customer to dynamically interact with a seller of
3 the product and with a supplier of a feature of the product over a network during the
4 configuration, the method comprising:

5 receiving, from a customer, a selection of a feature of the product at a
6 configuration engine of a seller of the product, the seller being a seller of the product to the
7 customer;

8 communicating the received selection from the configuration engine to a supplier
9 system of a supplier to the seller, the communication being during the configuration with the
10 customer, wherein the supplier system is associated with a supplier of the selected feature,
11 wherein the supplier is independent from the seller;

12 receiving into the configuration engine from the supplier system an automated
13 response to the communicated received selection, the automated real-time response including an
14 availability date of the selected feature, the response being received during the configuration
15 with the customer;

16 updating an in-process bill of materials based upon the availability date of the
17 selected feature; and

18 using the updated in-process bill of materials to determine a first availability date
19 of the product, the first availability date of the product being based on at least the availability
20 date of the selected feature; and

21 providing the first availability date of the product to the customer.

1 69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the automated real-
2 time response is generated by a manufacturer of the selected feature.

1 70. (Canceled)

1 71. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product having at least one
2 selectable feature, wherein the method allows a customer to dynamically interact with a seller of
3 the product and with a supplier of a feature of the product over a network during the
4 configuration, the method comprising:

5 receiving, from a customer, a selection of a feature of the product at a
6 configuration engine of a seller of the product;

7 communicating the received selection from the configuration engine to a supplier
8 system, the communication being during the configuration with the customer, wherein the

9 supplier system is associated with a supplier of the selected feature, wherein the supplier is
10 independent from the seller; and
11 receiving into the configuration engine from the supplier system an automated
12 real-time response to the communicated received selection, the response being received during
13 the configuration with the customer;
14 wherein the real-time automated response includes a plurality of availability dates
15 associated with the selected feature, each of the plurality of availability dates associated with a
16 different price of the selected feature.

1 72. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68, wherein the first availability
2 date of the product, determined using the updated in-process bill of materials, is further based on
3 an availability date of another selectable feature.

1 73. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68, further including receiving, at
2 the configuration engine, a feature price that corresponds to the selected feature.

1 74. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73, further including updating a
2 product price responsive to the received feature price, and providing the updated product price to
3 the customer.

1 75. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 73, wherein the received feature
2 price is responsive to a customer-specified availability date communicated to the seller and to the
3 supplier system.

1 76. (Currently Amended) A method for configuring a product using a computer
2 network, wherein the method allows a customer to dynamically interact with a seller of the
3 product and with a manufacturer of a feature of the product over the network during the
4 configuration, the method comprising:
5 receiving at a configuration engine a set of constraints defining a first set of valid
6 configurations of a product, the product having at least a first selectable feature and a second
7 selectable feature, the set of constraints being determined by a seller or a manufacturer;

8 receiving at the configuration engine a customer-specified constraint, the
9 customer specified constraint being received from a customer and being received using the
10 computer network;

11 receiving at the configuration engine a selection of the first selectable feature, the
12 received selection being received from the customer and being received using the computer
13 network;

14 communicating, from the configuration engine of the seller to the manufacturer,
15 the selection of the first selectable feature, the communication being during a configuration of
16 the product with the customer, wherein the manufacturer is independent from the seller;

17 determining a second set of valid configurations of the product, the second set of
18 valid configurations being a subset of the first set of valid configurations and being constrained
19 by the customer specified constraint and the received selection,

20 wherein the determination of the second set of valid configurations is a real-time
21 response to the selection of the first selectable feature;

22 determining at least two possible configurations of the second selectable feature
23 that satisfy the second set of valid configurations of the product; and

24 providing to the customer from the configuration engine the determined at least
25 two configurations of the second selectable feature, using the computer network.

1 77. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the customer
2 specified constraint includes an availability date of the product.

1 78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, wherein the customer
2 specified constraint includes a price of the product or a feature price.

1 79. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, further including determining
2 a feature price using the received selection and using the feature price to update a product price.

1 80. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, further including determining
2 a feature availability date using the received selection, and using the feature availability date to
3 determine a product availability date.

1 81. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, wherein determining at least
2 two configurations of the second selectable feature that satisfy the second set of valid
3 configurations includes identifying a third configuration of the second selectable feature that
4 would be an invalid configuration due to the customer specified constraint.

1 82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 76, further including receiving at
2 the configuration engine a feature availability date from a supply system of a manufacturer.

1 83-97 (Canceled)

1 98. (Currently Amended) A system for configuring a product that is associated
2 with a number of configurable features, wherein the system allows a customer to dynamically
3 interact with a seller of the product and a supplier of one or more of the configurable features
4 over a network during the configuration, the system comprising:

5 a configuration engine of a seller configured for receiving a selection of a feature
6 of the product from a customer, the seller being a seller of the product to the customer;

7 a communication module coupled to the configuration engine for communicating
8 the selected feature from the seller to the supplier, and for receiving over the network an
9 automated real-time response, including an availability date of the selected feature, from the
10 supplier to the configuration engine, the supplier being a supplier of the selected feature to the
11 seller and being independent from the seller, wherein the communicating and receiving occur
12 during the configuration with the customer; and

13 a first storage area coupled to one of the configuration engine and the
14 communication module for storing an in-process bill of materials that reflects the selected
15 feature.

1 99. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein after the customer has
2 completed configuring the product, the in-process bill of materials represents a completed bill of
3 materials.

1 100. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein in response to the
2 availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer, the communication module communicates
3 a customer-specified availability date to the supplier.

1 101. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein the automated real-
2 time response is in response to a customer-specified availability date communicated to the
3 supplier by the communication module.

1 102. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein the automated real-
2 time response is in response to a customer-specified price communicated to the supplier by the
3 communication module.

1 103. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein an in-process
2 manufacturing bill of materials is derived from the in-process bill of materials, and reflects the
3 availability date of the selected feature.

1 104. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, further comprising:
2 a second storage area coupled to one of the configuration engine and the
3 communication module for storing an in-process manufacturing bill of materials that reflects the
4 availability date of the selected feature; and
5 a third storage area coupled to one of the configuration engine and the
6 communication module for storing an in-process pricing bill of materials that reflects a price of
7 the selected feature.

1 105. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein the communication
2 module is also for communicating a price of the selected feature from the supplier to the
3 configuration engine.

1 106. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 105, wherein the communication
2 module comprises:
3 an availability date communication module for communicating the availability
4 date of the selected feature from the supplier to the configuration engine; and

5 a price communication module for communicating the price of the selected
6 feature to the configuration engine.

1 107. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, wherein a relationship
2 between the customer and the seller has a configuration side associated with the customer, and a
3 resource planning side associated with the seller, and the customer-seller relationship is
4 respectively one of a consumer-seller relationship, a seller-manufacturer relationship and a
5 manufacturer-vendor relationship.

1 108. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 107, wherein:
2 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the
3 configuration side, an in-process pricing bill of materials is derived from the in-process bill of
4 materials, wherein the in-process pricing bill of materials reflects the price of the selected
5 feature; and
6 in response to the price of the selected feature being determined on the resource
7 planning side, the in-process pricing bill of materials is derived from an in-process
8 manufacturing bill of materials that is derived from the in-process bill of materials and reflects
9 the received availability date of the selected feature.

1 109. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, further comprising:
2 a user interface coupled to the configuration engine for allowing the customer to
3 interact with the system..

1 110. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, further comprising:
2 an inventory library coupled to the configuration engine for providing the
3 customer a number of the configurable features that can be selected to configure the product.

1 111-114. (Cancelled)

1 115. (Currently Amended) A computer program product, stored on a computer-
2 readable medium, for configuring a product that is associated with a number of configurable
3 features, wherein in response to the computer program product being executed by a processor,
4 the processor performs the steps of:

5 receiving a selected product feature from a customer;
6 communicating over a network the selected feature to a supplier;
7 receiving from a supplier over the network an automated real-time response to the
8 communicated selected feature including an availability date that corresponds to the product
9 feature selected by the customer, the supplier being a supplier of the product feature to a seller
10 and being independent from the seller, the customer being a customer of the seller, wherein the
11 communicating and receiving is during a configuration of the product with the customer,
12 wherein the customer is allowed to dynamically interact with a seller of the
13 product and with the supplier of the selected feature of the product over a network during the
14 configuration.
15

1 116. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 132 ~~145~~,
2 further comprising:
3 updating a bill of materials to reflect the accommodation received from the
4 supplier.

1 117. (Currently Amended) A computer program product, stored on a computer
2 readable medium, for configuring a product that is associated with a number of configurable
3 features, wherein in response to the computer program product being executed by a processor,
4 the processor performs the steps of:
5 responsive to a customer selecting a feature of the product, receiving over a
6 network at a seller an automated real-time response including an availability date that
7 corresponds to the selected feature, the automated real-time response being from a manufacturer
8 of the selected feature, the response being received by the customer from the seller during the
9 configuration of the product, wherein the manufacturer is independent from the seller;
10 responsive to the received availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer,
11 communicating a customer-specified availability date to the manufacturer;
12 updating an in-process bill of materials to reflect the selected feature; and
13 in response to the customer being satisfied with a set of sales parameters
14 including the availability date of the selected feature, submitting a completed bill of materials to
15 the manufacturer over the Internet,

16 wherein the customer is allowed to dynamically interact with a seller of the
17 product and with the manufacturer of the selected feature of the product over a network during
18 the configuration.

1 118. (Currently Amended) A system for configuring a product that is associated
2 with a number of configurable features, wherein the system allows a customer to dynamically
3 interact with a seller of the product and a supplier of the product over the Internet during the
4 configuration, the system comprising:

5 configuration engine means for receiving at a seller of the product a selection by
6 the customer of a product feature, the product feature being one of the number of configurable
7 features, and for validating a number of constraints associated with the selected product feature;

8 communication module means coupled to the configuration engine means for
9 communicating from the seller to the supplier the selected product feature, and for
10 communicating over a network real-time availability date of the selected product feature from
11 the supplier to the configuration engine means, the supplier being a supplier of the selected
12 product feature to the seller and being independent from the seller, wherein the communicating
13 occurs during the configuration with the customer; and

14 storage area means coupled to at least one of the configuration engine means and
15 the communication module means for storing an in-process bill of materials that reflects the
16 product feature selected by the user.

1 119. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 35 85, wherein the availability
2 date received from the manufacturer system over the network is provided by an enterprise
3 resource planning (ERP) system.

1 120-124. (Canceled)

1 125. (Currently Amended) A system for selling a configurable product
2 incorporating at least one feature to be selected by a customer from a catalog of selectable
3 features, wherein the method allows a customer to dynamically interact with a seller of the
4 product and with a supplier of a feature of the product over the network during the configuration,
5 the system comprising:

an inventory library coupled to a configuration engine of a seller of the configurable product, the inventory library configured for providing the catalog of selectable features, the catalog of selectable features corresponding to a particular configurable product; a user interface coupled to the configuration engine using the network Internet, the user interface for displaying the catalog of selectable features and for receiving customer desires; and

a supplier system coupled to the configuration engine using the network, the supplier system being associated with the supplier and being configured for providing an automated real-time response, including at least one of availability information and price information to at least one of the user interface, the configuration engine, and the inventory library, wherein the supplier is independent from the seller, wherein the providing of the automated real-time response occurs during a configuration with the customer.

126. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 125, wherein the user interface, configuration engine, and supplier system are remotely located with respect to each other.

127. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 125, wherein the configuration engine further comprises:
a configuration application,
a price communication module,
an availability communication module, and
means for creating and updating at least one of a configuration bill of materials, a manufacturing bill of materials, and a pricing bill of materials.

128-130. (Canceled)

131. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 98, where in the configuration engine is configured for validating a number of constraints associated with the selected feature, the constraints relating to compatibility between the selected feature and other features of the product or availability of the product including the selected feature.

132. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 115, wherein the processor performs the additional steps of:

in response to the availability date being unsatisfactory to the customer, communicating over the network a customer-specified availability date to the supplier; and receiving from the supplier over the network an automated real-time response including an accommodation based on the customer specified availability date.

133. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the availability date received from the manufacturer system over the network is provided to or by a supply chain planning (SCP) system